



Mitchell E. Daniels, Jr.
Governor

Judith A. Monroe, M.D.
State Health Commissioner

Indiana State Department of Health

An Equal Opportunity Employer

Approximately every 26 seconds, an American will have a coronary event. About every minute someone dies from cardiovascular disease (CVD). Cardiovascular disease is the number one killer of men, women, Caucasians and African-Americans in Indiana; in total CVD claimed the life of more than 17,000 Hoosiers in 2005.

While these statistics can seem daunting, there is good news in the fight against CVD. We have the tools to reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease and to minimize its effects in Indiana. Together we can act to stop cardiovascular disease by taking three steps: 1) Know your risks, 2) Decrease your Risks, and 3) Recognize and Respond to the Warning Signs.

Know your Risks

There are numerous risk factors. Studies among coronary heart disease patients have shown that 90% have prior exposure to at least one of these heart disease risk factors. Two major risk factors for CVD are hypertension and high cholesterol, which occur without obvious symptoms. Fortunately, these conditions are easy to detect with a medical check-up. This is particularly important for African-Americans, who are the most likely to develop high blood pressure. The other risk factors include: tobacco smoke, stress, physical inactivity, obesity, excessive use of alcohol, and diabetes. Each risk factor is important independently and with more than one risk factor there is added concern for CVD.

Decrease your Risks

Risk of cardiovascular disease is an extension of what you do, or do not do, as you go about your daily activities. Certain risk factors for CVD, such as a family history of heart disease or age, cannot be prevented; but a large majority of risk factors can be minimized by simple changes to your diet and lifestyle. Stop exposure to cigarette smoke. Reduce intake of saturated and trans fats. Take blood pressure medications as prescribed. Be more active every day with walking or other physical activity for 30 minutes which also helps to reduce stress. Reduce excess weight safely with more balanced nutrition every day. Talk to your doctor about blood sugar screenings. Limit alcohol intake to one drink per day for women and two drinks per day for men.

Recognize and Respond to the Warning Sign

People believe a heart attack or stroke always strikes like a "movie heart attack," where an actor suddenly grabs his chest and collapses. In truth, many heart attacks and some strokes may start slowly, as a mild pain or discomfort. Some people attribute symptoms to stress or fatigue. Even those who have had a heart attack may not recognize their symptoms, because the next attack can have entirely different ones. Chest pain or discomfort is the most common heart attack warning sign; however, other warning signs that might occur are shortness of breath, sweating, and pain in one or more arms.

Some common symptoms of a stroke are sudden numbness or weakness in the face, arm or leg, especially on one side of the body, sudden confusion speaking or understanding speech, or sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes.

Quickly recognizing the signs of a heart attack and stroke allow you to act immediately in this type of event. A person's chances of surviving a heart attack or stroke are increased if emergency treatment is given to the victim as soon as possible. Do not dismiss the symptoms. Call 9-1-1 no matter what and let a doctor decide. Ignoring the symptoms could cost you your life.

We are fortunate to have the scientific knowledge to prevent, detect and treat cardiovascular disease and ultimately, eliminate it as the No. 1 killer. By acting on this information, we can prevent heart disease all together. For additional information, go to www.americanheart.org.

 **Epidemiology Resource Center**
2525 N. Shadeland Ave. Suite E3, Indianapolis, IN 46219
317.356.7190 ext. 253

 **Laboratories**
550 West 16th Street, Suite B, Indianapolis, IN 46202
317.921.5500

 **Weights & Measures**
2525 N. Shadeland Ave. Suite D3, Indianapolis, IN 46219
317.356.7078 ext. 221

 Governor Mitch Daniels'
IN SHAPE INDIANA
WWW.INSHAPE.IN.GOV 800.433.0746

2 North Meridian Street • Indianapolis, IN 46204 • 317.233.1325 • TDD 317.233.5577 • www.statehealth.in.gov

The Indiana State Department of Health supports Indiana's economic prosperity and quality of life by promoting, protecting and providing for the health of Hoosiers in their communities.